

MIDSTATE HAM RADIO CLUB

MARC

**SPARK
GAP**

"Ham Radio News from Johnson County, Indiana"

VOLUME XIII NO. 05

MAY 1997

DAMP RILEY WALK EARNS 1K

Despite deep puddles and the threat of more severe thunderstorms, the "Walk for Riley" stepped off as scheduled April 27th. Eleven Mid-State ARC members provided communications and directions around the course to the 39 participants. This was the sixth annual Walk-a-thon sponsored by the Psi Iota Xi Sorority in Franklin. Over \$1000 in donations were pledged. The funds will be used to purchase recreational equipment for the bedfast patients in the Teen and School Aged units at Riley Children's Hospital.

The three mile Riley Walk-a-thon began near the Providence Park Pool under gray skies. Light drizzle fell on the walkers as they looped through the Masonic Home area, and then north into downtown Franklin. Rain drops greeted the fleet footed-females as they trekked west past the court house and then south on Main street. Their cool wet walk ended back in the swimming pool parking lot. Bob

LeGrange- N9SIU ran net control from the tailgate of his pickup truck. Bob set up a portable mast and 2-meter broadcast station for the event. Key corners were manned, and *womaned* by club members. Providing directions were JR Osborne-KB9HSE, George Burton-N9TUN, George Weimer-KG9HU, Vernie Parton-AA9LR, Marilyn Parton-N9TUK and Dave Daily-KB9LOT. Joe Vergara-KA9ZPA, Karen Vergara- N9KMH and Corey Vergara-KB9OXU provided additional support to the effort. According to Bob LeGrange, "It was a cold miserable day." He appreciates everyone's effort and was glad it only took the women an hour to race around the course. -MARC



HAMs salute Flag Day



Here's your chance to be a Yankee Doodle Dandy. Saturday June 14th is Flag Day. According to the 11th District American Legion, it's a day to re-establish what the flag stands for and tell the history of

the flag. The Legion needs a few good men and women to help with communications during their day long celebration at the American Legion Mall in downtown Indianapolis. Set-up will begin a 8 AM and the day will conclude around 5 PM. George Burton-N9TUN is coordinating the Flag Day communications project. See George at the May MARC meeting if you can help. It's time to re-kindle patriotism, the American Legion says, and promote the citizens Flag Alliance Program. -MARC

SPARK GAP

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Membership Information

The Mid-State Amateur Radio Club is a Franklin based organization open to all amateur radio operators in central Indiana.

The MARC meets the third Saturday of each month in the training room of the Johnson County Emergency Operations Center at 1100 Hospital Road in Franklin, In.

The MARC operates a 2-meter repeater at 146.835 MHz. Each club member has free access to the repeater and autopatch.

Annual membership is \$18.00. VE Testing follows each meeting from March through November.

Submit stories to the editor on disk or via e-mail by the 3rd of each month.

Send change-of-address information and membership applications to the club treasurer @ MARC President, P.O. Box 836, Franklin, In. 46131.

The Spark Gap is published monthly by the Mid-State ARC.



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Jack Parker, NT9J
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VE Team Coordinator

Dave Wendt, KA9OOH
H. 974-1488

Club Meeting

8 AM Saturday May 17th

Guest speaker, Rick Reneau - KB9NDF

Topic: Lost Hoosier Treasurers

VE Testing

9:15 AM following club meeting

KB9NDF to explain finding Hoosier treasurers

"Earthbounce or Using Radio to Communicate With the Past" is the title of Rick Reneau's talk this week. Rick-KB9NDF has been active in metal detecting for over three years. He says detecting allows him to discover objects that have been lost and overlooked by others. They are lost treasures until he shows up with his machine. Rick will explain about metal detectors and their use. He will explain their history and the physics involved in metal detecting. Rick says metal detectors are actually transceivers and transmit a signal into the material being searched such as soil or walls or concrete. They analyze the "echo" returned by whatever metallic object(s) are in the transmission path. He says finding gold, silver and copper would not be possible if the equipment were only a magnetometer.



"Thar's gold under
your feet, dude."

"I have found numerous objects of a 'curious nature' as well as plain old 'regular' coins," Rick says. "In 1995 I recovered enough, at face value, to finance a family trip to King's Island." Rick has used his machines to recover specific objects lost by friends and acquaintances. Lost wedding rings, jewelry and car keys in snow banks have been a few of his most memorable finds.

"Many detectorists start out looking for 'treasure' and wind up getting heavily involved in historical research," Rick says. "Recently,

metal detectorists assisted National Parks archeologists at the Little Big Horn battleground." Their assistance has proven instrumental in rewriting the history of that battle. "Without the additional information provided by the targets recovered in this effort," Rick says, "the actual course and lines of this battle would always be the subject of incorrect speculation." Those involved in the hobby (like those in amateur radio) cover the entire spectrum of social and economic circumstances. Also, like amateur radio, digital signal processing is enhancing the success of detector users. There are detectorists that make a very good living using their equipment to find gold nuggets. Recently, a gold nugget weighing over 100 pounds (and valued at \$1 million!) was found by a detectorist at a depth of over 5 feet. Rick says one of the most valuable treasures he gets from each detecting adventure is relaxation. In today's busy world that may prove to be the most valuable treasure gained. Join Rick at the May meeting and take away a treasure of your own.



"Contact" features HAM radio

Some ham radio paraphernalia supplied by the ARRL will appear in the upcoming Warner Brothers' film, *Contact*. The League loaned the moviemakers vintage QSTs and other publications and maps for use in the production. Mike Gastaldo of WB's

props department said the radio shack scenes "happen in the first 15 minutes of the film. You can tell people to go for the ham radio scenes and stay for the astrophysics." Gastaldo expressed thanks to the League for "helping us to portray Amateur Radio in as realistic and positive a way as possible." The movie is scheduled to open July 11. -ARRL Bulletin

1 X 1 Calls Frozen

The FCC won't be authorizing any more 1x1 Amateur Radio call signs under Special Temporary Authority (STA) any time soon. That was the word this week from David Horowitz, the acting chief of the FCC's Private Wireless Division. Horowitz—who's an attorney—said he felt the FCC should not have issued STAs for any 1x1 call signs while a rulemaking proceeding regarding formal rules for 1x1 call signs, FCC Docket WT 95-57, was in the works. Action in that proceeding might not happen for several months.

Horowitz' decision effectively denied a half dozen or so pending requests for 1x1 call sign STAs. Some two dozen written STA requests for 1x1 call signs were routinely granted over the past year or so by former Private Wireless Division Chief Robert McNamara. That number does not include the 52 1x1 call signs issued for use by contestants in last summer's World Radiosport Team Championship 96 (WRTC-96) event in the San Francisco Bay area. The League has been assured by the FCC Wireless Telecommunications Bureau that it will move expeditiously toward concluding the docket proceeding that includes the 1x1 call sign rules matter. --ARRL Bulletin

HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED:

If you shoot a mime, should you use a silencer?

What was the best thing before sliced bread?

Why doesn't glue stick to the inside of the bottle?

Remember When?

From a past issue of the Spark Gap

Over a dozen MARC members and their families visited the Aerospace Lab at Franklin High School March 23rd. Instructor Doug Craig showed the group the framework for the new space shuttle simulator that is currently under construction.

The first CPR class sponsored by the Mid-State ARC and Johnson County RACES was held Saturday April 3rd. Nine people participated in the eight hour course at the Johnson County EOC. This was the first step toward a RACES goal of training every member in CPR and first aid.

For the first time in the history of the Mid-State ARC an informational booth was set up and manned by club members at the Indy hamfest last Sunday. A large photo taken during one Field Day showing a hugh crane with all of the antennas was displayed. An attached sign boasted that "Our club has a 50-ton rotor".

QRM enforcement urged

Citing "a substantial need to improve and increase the quantity and quality" and timeliness of enforcement in malicious interference complaints, the ARRL has called on the FCC to "create a streamlined, privatized enforcement process" to handle and adjudicate the most serious Amateur Service rules violations. In a petition for rulemaking filed March 28, the League asked that the FCC change its rules to permit members of the volunteer Amateur Auxiliary to bring evidence of malicious interference violations directly before the Chief Administrative Law Judge. The Chief ALJ would be authorized to determine if the complainants have a valid case, to issue show-cause orders, and to designate complaints for hearing. The League recommended that the FCC capitalize on the volunteer resources available through the Amateur Auxiliary to relieve the evidence-gathering burden in such cases. If the rules changes are approved, the League said it would likely assist members of the Amateur Auxiliary in preparing and submitting complaints and in presenting cases at administrative hearings.

ARRL Bulletin

Happy Birthday

Amy Lacy	N9YVY	5/25
Carlos Ramirez-Rios	N9UHY	5/10
Cory Vergara	KB9OXU	5/17
Dick Farrow	WB9UWL	5/12
Donald Newswanger	W6NVE	5/16
Edward Holloran	WA9WIH	5/23
Harry Campbell	WB9RVX	5/4
John Robinson	N9ZRS	5/31
Mac McCarty	NV9K	5/19
Mike Rosemark	KA9VMR	5/5
Rocky Bundy	KB9LWN	5/14
Thomas Deon	KB9KDI	5/31
Tim Sanford	N9XNP	5/20
Willard Henderson	N9XQA	5/3

Famous Last Words:

We'll only stay five minutes.

Believe me, no one will dress up.

April VE Test Results

Robert Smith	Greenwood	Novice
Clayton Cooper	KB9NQI	Tech +
Sarah Cummings	Columbus	Novice
Steve Siscoe	Shelbyville	Tech
Charles Stailey	Fortville	Tech
Michael Graham	Columbus	Tech
Steven Low	Columbus	Tech
Rebecca Turner	Columbus	Tech

Forced Fed Hams

ARRL HAM-IN-A-WEEKEND CLASS A SUCCESS

An intensive weekend Amateur Radio licensing class at ARRL Headquarters in mid-April attracted prospective hams from as far away as Kansas, Texas and Arkansas. By the time it was over, all 20 ham radio newcomers had passed their Technician exams and one Novice had upgraded to Tech Plus, and then still had time left to assemble for a class photo at WIAW! Overseeing the condensed training program was Ed Hammond, WN11, an author and lecturer who's been a ham for 25 years. At the end of the sessions--which started on a Friday evening and continued through Sunday afternoon--all of the students took and passed their Technician exams, administered by a group of local volunteer examiners. In addition to the material required to earn a license, Hammond covered such topics as proper repeater and amateur operating procedures and demonstrated ham radio equipment. -ARRL Bulletin

FD '97 plans made

Field Day '97 plans are being made this month. The annual event will be held at the Johnson County Parks Department meeting room in Camp Atterbury. This is the 11th year club members will set up shop to participate in the 24-hour radio marathon. The 1996 Field Day exercise was a record setter. More hams, more contacts, more food and more fun for everyone involved. Forty-six Amateur Radio operators worked the microphones and CW keys to score what turned out to be one of the highest club scores ever.



The new RACES tower/trailer was officially put into service. A three element beam and rotor were installed for HF work. The tower was cranked up to the 40-foot level where radio operators could make contacts all across the country. Late afternoon thunder showers forced the contesters to pull the plug on making contacts for about 90 minutes. The storm broke the early summer heat wave that had the morning set up crew sweating.

This year veteran operators say they are looking forward to air conditioning, running water and nearby bathroom facilities at the park office.

A midnight cookout sponsored by then Club President, Terry Grubb, N9YLJ, made night owls out of many club members. Terry served up grilled hot dogs and hamburgers to nearly two dozen radio operators. This followed the traditional Saturday night pitch-in with family members. Anyone wishing to help plan the June 28th & 29th operation is encouraged to call JR Osborne, KB9HSE on the repeater. All volunteers will be welcomed. Mark your calendars for a weekend of fun at Field Day '97. -MARC

VE Protection

Good news for ham radio volunteers: the Amateur Radio Volunteer Services Act of 1997 (HR 1013) has been introduced into Congress by a California Congresswoman. If enacted, the bill would place volunteers in the Volunteer Examination Program and the Amateur Auxiliary under the protections of the Federal Tort Claims Act by affording them the same legal protections as employees of the Federal Government while they're carrying out such volunteer duties. The bill would help protect the personal liability of volunteer Amateur Radio operators while performing duties on behalf of the Federal Government.

As the Congresswoman explained it on the House floor, it's simply a question of fairness for volunteers, who risk damaging lawsuits while saving the government time and money. The bill was introduced with 21 cosponsors hailing from both parties. It was noted on the House floor that "Amateur Radio operators are self-regulated, with volunteer operators monitoring the airwaves for violations and administering licensing exams. This volunteer corps saves countless hours of staff time and resources for the Federal Communications Commission; however, because they are not Federal employees, they put their personal assets at risk in the event of actions taken against them as a result of their volunteer service to the Government."

"It is simply unfair that these volunteers who are saving the Government time and resources should have to risk their personal assets in carrying out their service. The Amateur Radio Volunteer Services Act of 1997 would classify those individuals donating their time and expertise to maintaining the quality of the Amateur Radio airwaves as Federal employees only for the purpose of actions taken against them in the performance of their duties as self-regulators. This action will ensure the continued viability of the amateur radio community and continue to save the FCC and the Federal Government time and money that would otherwise need to be expended." -ARRL Bulletin

Origin of a Lid



Hey, What's ur personal?

by Allan Bellnat, KX2H

Some say the term "lid" came from early landline Morse telegraphy days, when a common practice was to fasten an empty tobacco can, or its lid, to the armature of a telegraph sounder-producing a distinctive sound that helped the operator copy one sounder in a room of clattering sounders. As the story goes, the more skillful operators looked on the practice with disdain. And called their less-skilled brethren lids.

In my days in the telegraph department of AT&T Long Lines (mid-fifties), I had the pleasure and privilege of knowing old timers who had been landline telegraphers for railroads, brokerages, or the press. As a smart-alecky kid of eighteen who had already been a General Class ham for three years, I thought I was a good Morse operator. But of course the telegraph used landline Morse, not the American Morse we use on the radio. I eventually learned to send passable landline Morse on a straight key and to receive it on a sounder, but I never got good at it.

When I mentioned the term lid to those old timers, they didn't recognize it in the ham context. They were aware of the practice of using tobacco cans or their lids on sounders, but they didn't seem to attach any stigma to it. They did describe a wooden "listening stick" that you could put between your ear and a sounder to amplify and filter the sound when noise in the room made copying difficult. I have seen auto mechanics apply the same idea to listen to individual valves of a running engine.

from the March 1993 IBM ARC of Boca Raton (Florida)
"WB4QNZ" - Neal Osborn, N4PBY, Editor.

Radio Shack pulls HT

Radio Shack notified its stores April 17 that it's immediately recalling unsold stocks of its new TX-204 dual-band handheld transceiver because of what a source at Radio Shack headquarters called "a regulatory compliance issue" involving the transceiver. Radio Shack said it plans to take the HTX-204 off the market and has no immediate plans to offer another dual-band HT. The HTX-204 started showing up in the chain's 7000 retail



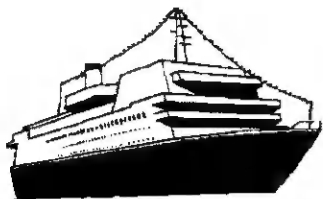
stores about six weeks ago. A Radio Shack official at the company's Ft Worth, Texas, headquarters said the company was concerned about the "potential for illegal use" of the HTX-204. He declined to be specific, but he did emphasize that the HTX-204 is perfectly legal for use on Amateur Radio frequencies. Radio Shack expressed disappointment with the turn of events surrounding the HTX-204 and directed any questions to local Radio Shack retail stores. -ARRL Bulletin

Hamfest Hints

The following is a para-phrased list of Hamfest shopping tips offered by Steve Ford, WB8IMY in the March '93 QST:

- Avoid older FM transceivers that require crystals. You can spend as much as \$10 for each frequency.
- When considering an older HF transceiver avoid those that use a large number of vacuum tubes. Tubes are becoming scarce.
- Before buying any transceiver find out if the manufacturer is still in business and if it still provides parts and service.
- Inspect the rig thoroughly. If it is battery-powered ask to see it operate.
- Ask the seller if you can look inside the rig. Be suspicious if he refuses! Look for burnt components, cracked or cooked circuit boards and melted wires. Ask if the power supply is included.
- Ask if the operating manual is included. These can sometimes be difficult to acquire.
- Arrive early. The best bargains are snapped up in a hurry.
- All used equipment prices are negotiable. Offer something less. If he says "no", come back in a few hours and ask again. If he really wants to sell it he will drop his price.
- Be prepared to pay cash. Most don't want to accept a check from someone they don't know.
- And last, **LET THE BUYER BEWARE!!** If you have problems with your purchase after you get home it's your responsibility.
- **FINALLY**, on your way home start thinking about how you are going to explain your purchases to your wife!

CW saves the day Amateurs provide Flood assistance



W2AX ATTEMPTS TO FILL SHIPBOARD CW GAP

While aboard the Queen Elizabeth II for an around-the-world cruise earlier this year, Larry Amodeo, W2AX, of Manhasset, New York, found his CW ability suddenly in demand. On February 5, while operating /mm from the

ship's ham radio shack—which is located in the QE2's radio room—the ship's radio operator called him over to see if Amodeo could copy what he thought was a distress call on 500 kHz—the old maritime emergency frequency. Amodeo said the ship's operator told him he did not copy CW much above 10 WPM, and there was not a telegraph key in sight (although Amodeo said he later found out there's one hidden away in case it's needed).

"We were about two days out of Fiji," Amodeo said. "At the time, I was working JAs on 20—a pileup." By the time he got to the ship's radio, the signal was gone. Amodeo went back to 20 meters, but the ship's operator called him over again after a few minutes when the distress signal reappeared. "It quit by the time I got there," he said. But the third time around, Amodeo managed to copy "4X" out of the noise. He surmised the vessel might be of Israeli registry, but he was not able to copy anything further. The next day, however, he learned his hunch was correct. An Israeli freighter had run aground off Fiji. Another ship intercepted the call and, fortunately, there were no casualties.

Amodeo has been a ham for 45 years and was a merchant marine shipboard radio operator himself in the late 1940s and early 1950s, but he'd never heard a distress call before. "When I sat down at that receiver, I was hit by a wave of nostalgia," he said. —*ARRL Bulletin*

Did you ever wonder:

Why do they put Braille on the number pads of drive-through bank machines?

How did a fool and his money GET together?

If nothing sticks to Teflon, how do they stick Teflon on the pan?

How do they get a deer to cross at that yellow road sign?

Ham radio has assumed a critical role in the wake of major flooding along the Red River that overtook the cities of Grand Forks, North Dakota, and East Grand Forks, Minnesota. Most area residents—an estimated 50,000 people—were evacuated into surrounding towns and emergency shelters. The Salvation Army has been assisting at many of the temporary camps and shelters, providing food and other necessities, and Amateur Radio has been maintaining important communication links—including one between various flood relief sites and a Salvation Army warehouse in Minneapolis.

ARRL Minnesota Section Manager Randy Wendel, N0FKU, reports that ARES, RACES, MARS and other members of the Amateur Radio community have been working together with the primary aim of assisting the Salvation Army and other emergency relief agencies. Some nearby areas have few or no hams, so some operators have volunteered to drive long distances to help out, he said. When an HF link was needed between Salvation Army relief sites and the Minneapolis warehouse, a number of HF mobile operators from Minneapolis volunteered to make the nearly six-hour trip to the flooded region to help assure communication.

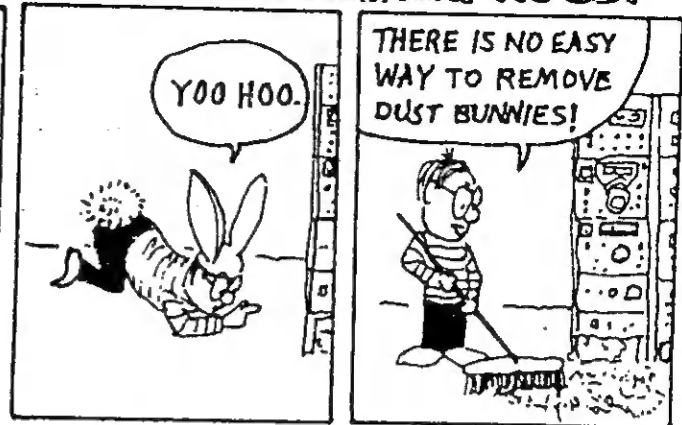
Wendel said hams must realize the importance of "having the capability to travel and set up a remote station at various locations." North Dakota Section Manager Bill Kurtti, WCOM, reports that hams in that stricken state are providing backup communication for the various agencies involved in the flood-relief effort. "A book could be written about just the ham radio involvement," he said. Kurtti said the biggest communication obstacle hams are trying to help overcome is to coordinate communication among the various relief agencies that don't share one another's radio frequencies. "Ham flexibility can tie them together," he said. Links have been established on HF (75 meters), VHF and UHF, he reports.

The ARRL's emergency 2-meter repeater has been shipped to the Forx Amateur Radio Club in Grand Forks, North Dakota, to serve as a backup to the single repeater still in operation as the Red River begins to recede and the massive clean-up and damage-assessment process begins. The repeater was previously loaned to the US Virgin Islands after a hurricane took out all amateur repeaters on St Thomas in 1995. ARES was running continuous VHF and UHF nets in the Grand Forks area to assist with flood efforts. The county lost its radio towers during the earlier ice storm and blizzard, but with the hams' ingenuity and physical labor, the county's radio system was back on the air the next day. —*ARRL Bulletin*

ELMER



By Rich Regent, K9GDF



ARNS

Work projects planned

As summer approaches mark your calendar to help with the many club clean-up projects. The repeater shack needs painting, caulking and general clean-up. The weeds around the repeater shack need cutting. Check with club President Dennis Parton-KB9HPQ if you can help with these projects.

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CYBER SPACE CONNECTIONS

MARC Internet Home Page

<http://www.surf-ici.com/marc>

Crossroads Broadcast BBS

Charlie Sears, N9MEW - 535-1643

Windtrax Home Page

<http://www.windtrax.org>



Bob LeGrange-N9SIU works the HF Rig on the phone bands during Field Day 1996.